



Norm Wyatt and Al Rivera (fourth and fifth, respectively, from right) recently joined an elite group of INL bus drivers who have each attained one million safe professional driving miles.

A million miles -- and full of smiles

by John Howze, *INL Communications*

Al Rivera, with 23 years of driving, and Norm Wyatt, with 22 years, each have spent most of their working lifetimes behind the wheel of an Idaho National Laboratory passenger bus ferrying Site workers to and from the remote INL facilities at all hours of the day and night, in all types of road and weather conditions.

Now the two men have something else in common. Each has driven a million safe miles professionally along the way.

"INL is proud of these two drivers," said Dwayne Coburn, Facilities & Site Services director. "The safety of our people is of overriding importance. And Norm and Al have kept themselves, their passengers, and other drivers safe over careers that so far have spanned more than two decades. The service they have provided exemplifies what our bus system is all about — getting our people to work and back home safely each and every day."

"I also wish to recognize and thank the entire group of hard-working men and women who support our fleet through mechanical work, maintenance and repair, dispatch and administrative work," Coburn said. "Our drivers have the very best maintenance and support team behind them all day, every day, throughout the year."

During the Integrated Transportation Services safety banquet where they were recognized for their achievements, Wyatt was teary-eyed as he received his award in a room filled with applause. Rivera was unable to attend.

"I would like to thank my wife, my fellow bus drivers, and the mechanics and technicians who take care of our buses," Wyatt said. "They made this possible for me. Thanks to them, I had the easy job — behind the wheel."

"It is a special moment," he said. "It takes a lot of years of safe driving to reach a million miles. I would like to thank everyone who has helped me along the way."

Later, Rivera echoed those sentiments. The two men join an elite group of INL bus drivers who have each attained one million safe professional driving miles: Glen Horsch, Robin Miller, Rolando Hernandez, Grover Staub, Bill Quinn, Joel Wright, Claude May, Clint Sims and Dennis Merrill.

INL, the only DOE site to operate a large fleet of passenger buses, has nearly 100 buses operating daily to take workers to and from the INL Site, located roughly 40 miles west of Idaho Falls in the vast sagebrush steppe called the Snake River Plain. The INL bus fleet logs more than 3 million miles a year; the average INL bus driver logs about 30,000 miles, though that varies depending on the route driven and other factors.



Al Rivera has driven more than a million safe miles during his 23 years as an INL bus driver.

Today INL has about 3,700 workers, two-thirds of whom work at one or another of the laboratory's remote facilities. The nearest, the Materials & Fuels Complex, is located 28 miles west of Idaho Falls. Other facilities are 40 to 60 miles from town.

The bus system originated from a combination of security and safety concerns. At the place where America developed both nuclear reactors for naval propulsion and the first generation of nuclear reactors for electricity production and other peaceful purposes, the buses enabled better control of who did or did not enter the INL Site.

But with remotely located facilities served only by two-lane highways — and with winter weather that includes subzero cold, stiff winds and frequent whiteout conditions — the buses also offered safer transport for workers going to and from the INL.

Scott Lyman, manager of Bus Operations for INL, explained how difficult it really is to reach the milestone.



“The slightest accident — even backing into something and making a small dent or scratch in a bus — would reset the odometer that counts safe miles, according to the guidelines set by National Safety Council,” he said. “This essentially requires the driver to ‘sit out’ from the miles accumulation for 1 year (with no accidents) and then afterward the driver can continue to accumulate safe driving miles toward the Million Mile goal.”

“At INL, there is no higher priority than safety, and reaching the million-mile milestone is not something we take lightly,” said Debby Tate, director who oversees INL Bus Operations. “We are very proud to boast of our million milers. Assembled together, this exceptional group of individuals represents the foundation that INL Bus Operations was built upon, that of working together to provide the customer with world-class quality service. We count ourselves extremely fortunate to have these individuals driving our motor coaches, and the many others who are working toward the same goal.”

[Feature Archive](#)

Norm Wyatt has driven more than a million safe miles during his 22 years as an INL bus driver.